There was an important psychological difference between the two work seasons. At planting time, people were anxious; at harvest they were happy. People saw cash just ahead, for the crop was now safe. Each host of a cooperative work party gave at least one big convivial feast, the best he could provide and even the hired laborers got a round of liquor. People joked more than usual at work. Two boat loads of workers were observed racing down a canal at 6 a.m., shouting and cheering, although they had probably worked long hours for days or weeks before. Everyone knew that a joyous season was at hand.

When the crop was in, the people rested, fished, and began to prepare for big ceremonies demanding organized work. Supplies of fish were needed for preserving or for feasts. Labor and engines were now available, and with water low, fishponds could be conveniently drained, and the fish on the muddy bottom caught. A pond might be drained two or three times a year, but timing was determined by the availability of equipment and workers and by the needs of the annual ceremonial cycle. One pot of fish was given to each helper at a cooperative pond-draining.

Most farmers sold their rice in February. Capital was invested in farm equipment, buffalo, housing and ceremonies. Debts were cleared if possible. Cash expenditures for food, which had declined progressively since the beginning of the rice year, reached the yearly minimum, mostly because people had ample time to fish. People also saved up their money if they were sponsoring a ceremony, ate lightly at home if they were going to one. Since school closed from March 15 to May 1, because of the heat, money was not given to children for snacks.

The land dried up and cracked, rainwater for drinking gave out, and some canals were reduced to mud. Cherished plants were kept alive by watering, but no new planting could be done. Buffalo, which at either seasons were confined and fed, now roamed the fields, nibbling stubble. Everyone was busy and happy. Ordinations, weddings, cremations, merit-making feasts and several big holidays came one after another. Of the four New Year's Days observed in Bang Chan, the Buddhist New Year, which because of the lunar calendar fell about mid-April, was the most important, being celebrated over two days with extensive offerings of food to the priests and with other activities. The official New Year's Day, January 1, and the traditional New Year's Day about November 1, had rather slight observances. Chinese New Year's, in February, was celebrated by the Chinese residents who presented a school teacher and their hamlet headmen each with a boiled chicken and a Chinese sweet. Lent officially closed the ceremonial season, but the advent of plowing-time slowed the pace considerably.

When the rains finally came, the rice year started again.

Table 5. Diet Classifications for 75 School Children in Bang Chan, and Percentage of Children with Each Diet Classification who Missed Lunch

(Adapted from Thorangkul, 1957)

Diet classification[1]	Percentage of children	Percentage of children who missed lunch	
Class I	8	Boys	46
		Girls	45
Class II	61	Boys	73
		Girls	68
Class III	31	Boys	81
		Girls	98

1. See text for basis of classification.

vegetables eaten, since items from these two food groups were not commonly eaten as snacks. Note, in the illustrative records presented in translation (Appendix A, p. 98), that the child whose diet was considered to be in Class III did not eat a regular lunch on any of the six days for which records were available, whereas the child whose diet was classified as I ate a regular lunch six times out of seven.

Family Food Shared With Others

Throughout the year families prepared especially good meals for persons who came to work cooperatively with them. Every rice-grower entertained his cooperative harvest crew, some the transplanters. Hired laborers were not usually served such feasts, but the conviviality of the harvest season called for a round of liquor even for them. One harvest dinner for 48 cost 50 baht, plus eels (60 baht) and rice. Cooperative home pounding of rice was still practiced in some households and thought to be fun. In one day enough rice to produce 40 tang (640 kg.) was pounded by groups of 15 to 20 workers; in an evening 20 tang were done. If 40 tang were milled, workers were served a full meal; if 20 tang, a dessert only. Other occasions were fish-pond draining, house raising and repair. Each participant in the fish-pond draining at Household 21 was fed (3)khaaw (3)tom (soupy rice) for lunch and "an enormous supper," in addition to receiving the traditional pot of fish. If good food were not served at these functions people

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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the village to find dependent relatives—siblings, cousins, nephews, nieces— 596
who, unable to make a go of it elsewhere, are accepted into a relative's family, sometimes to the extent of eventually taking over the headship of the family. Sometimes, on the initiative and invitation of an elderly or lonely relative, an entire nuclear family will be asked to take over or share a household. Children of poor or "inconvenienced" families (where a new 596
child is born before the first is weaned, where there are too many children 597
for the mother to handle comfortably, where a youngster is simply being "troublesome") are adopted or "borrowed" by other villagers for varying periods of time. This is done preferably by relatives, sometimes by neighbors, and often, in the case of boys, by the monastery, where the children become hand-servants to the monks and are supposed to absorb, by a kind of osmotic process, righteous ways of behaving. (Of my three male life history informants, two were given over to relatives at the ages of two, the third at the age of eight; one spent his childhood with four different families, another with five families; one describes his adolescence as "wandering from place to place." The psychological implications of such displacement should not be underestimated.) On occasion, two independent 596
nuclear families—almost always connected by some kinship tie—will join [594]
together for convenience to share cooking facilities, in which case they effectively become a single extended family. And in some cases, although rare, one will encounter adult children living in independent households but handing over their income to a parent, living in still another home, who disburses the proceeds when necessary.

On the other side, it is common practice in Bang Chan now for a 596
husband to be away for four or five months at a time earning money in 591
Bangkok, or during the dry season on a vegetable farm, returning home to [464]
visit his wife and children whenever opportunity permits, with or without funds. The wife may still maintain their household, but often returns to 596
live with her own parents.[7] In a similar vein, although obviously more 586
extreme, it is not unusual to find families in Bang Chan which have simply 182
"disintegrated," as the villagers say. Much depends here on the circumstances of family members. Bang Chaners usually reserve the term "disintegrated" for families that no longer have the economic wherewithal or justification for staying together as functioning units. In these instances, family members simply go their separate ways, if possible back to their families of orientation or to other relatives, husbands perhaps into the monkhood, and the children to whomever will take them. Most frequently, [578]
"disintegration" is characteristic of very poor families, and in the minds of

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[7] This pattern may be related to the old *corvée* labor pattern when able-bodied [466] •
village men were away from their families for extended periods of time. [651]
[174]

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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tries to identify the bases of their contact. Having once identified these, he then tends to assume that not only the bases but the relationships themselves are relatively constant and reliable.[18] The relationship between Bang Chan employer and employee is an excellent example of the problem. An investigator concerned with specifying the bases of their relationship could readily point to two factors; contractual (in the strict meaning of the term) and sentimental. The former involves the exchange of a sum of money for labor fulfilled. The latter involves an array of behaviors expressive of the employer's concern for his retainer: feeding him well, not making him work too hard, treating him like a younger sibling or "adopted" child, recognizing his birthday, or buying him small gifts if possible. Interestingly, the subordinate's obligations to his superior are considerably less explicit and social psychologically less demanding: he must simply respect and obey him. However, as accurate as these specifications are, they say nothing about the reliability of the relationship. It may be broken off over matters that have nothing to do with how well each is fulfilling his interactive responsibilities. The employee may become bored; he may have a sudden desire to take a trip or go to Bangkok; if he is from a distant village, he may suddenly become homesick and just as suddenly leave. As indicated earlier, he will frequently do this without saying a word to the employer; his absence is sufficient to indicate the termination of the relationship.

Very often the breakdown of the relationship is short-lived. I recall my exasperation during the early stages of field work when right in the middle of an important interview, my field assistant would tell me—with absolutely no forewarning—that he had to be in Bangkok in an hour and a half, and would have to leave now. When I suggested that the interview first be completed, the reply, the first time this happened, was "No, I promised a friend I would meet him at the movies, and I have to go now." When asked why he made a movie date during working hours, he answered: "Well, this was the only time my friend could go." The straightforwardness of his response indicated that it was both futile and dangerous (he might never return from the movies) to ask why the friend could not go alone, what the real reason was for his sudden departure, or why he did not tell me beforehand so I could have made different plans. Pursuing such queries would have served only to annoy my assistant, rather than hold him; and from his own point of view, they were really not my business. This kind of behavior was neither idiosyncratic to this individual nor limited to movies. Later on, when other assistants asked for intermissions, the explanations

[18] Certain relationships are of course explicitly recognized as inconstant and unreliable. The relationship between appliance owner and repairman in our society, for example, has come to have these special attributes—not without strain and exasperation, but as part of the reality of the relationship.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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571 123 • 466 given were equally oblique. Although I never really overcame my feeling of helplessness in dealing with such situations, I did manage over a period of time to communicate to those in my employ the appropriateness (at least regarding our own particular relationship) of giving me fair warning, *e.g.*, "Europeans are different in this way."

571 Again, there is nothing extraordinary or unique about personal desires and inclinations intruding on the stability of an interpersonal relationship. However, what is unique to Bang Chan and Thai culture in general is the frequency of such intrusions, the extent to which they take precedence over the responsibilities of the established relationship, and perhaps most important, their general expectability. No Bang Chaner is ever taken aback when another does not fulfill his assumptions about how that other will behave. Note that these intrusions may have little effect on the face-to-face contacts existing between people. My assistant's declaration that he was going to the movies was presented in a most affable way and in the other examples cited, where people were left in the lurch, there need not have been any contact whatsoever between the parties involved.

*[156]

114 *156 171 Reference was made to these modes of relationship in the section on Bang Chan social organization and kinship. However, they received their first formal, and perhaps most elegant, formulation in a now famous article entitled "Thailand—A Loosely Structured Social System," by the late John F. Embree (1950). Embree's application of the notion of "loose structure" was mainly descriptive rather than analytic; it was used to summarize a wide variety of empirical materials. Thus (182): "The first characteristic of Thai culture to strike an observer from the West, or from Japan or Vietnam is the individualistic behavior of the people. The longer one resides in Thailand the more one is struck by the almost determined lack of regularity, discipline, and regimentation in Thai life. In contrast to Japan, Thailand lacks neatness and discipline; in contrast to Americans, the Thai lack respect for administrative regularity and have no industrial time sense." After providing an extensive series of examples—on the lack of binding filial piety, on the tendency to permit a thief to steal from a neighbor's house without raising an alarm or attempting to stop him, on the capacity to delay and double-talk those with whom one has business dealings, Embree concludes (184): "The point here once more is that . . . while obligations are recognized, they are not allowed to burden one unduly. Such as are sanctioned are observed freely by the individual—he acts of his own will, not as a result of social pressure."

*114 156 While Embree's formulation is by definition phrased in social structural terms, it inevitably directs our attention to an underlying motivational issue: the nature of the villagers' dispositions to conformity. Conformity to the expectations of others—whether such expectations are shared, comple-

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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A Bang Chan employee who walks out on his superior because he does not like the food he is served or a villager who agrees to lend a person money and then is not at home when the person calls for the loan can easily account for his actions by saying that circumstances had changed.

It must be noted, and this is crucial, that there is generally no animosity felt toward the employer with the unpalatable food, toward the fleeing[21] employee, or toward the unreliable creditor. Villagers are thoroughly conditioned to the possibility of such events and accept them simply as part of the inauspicious nature of life. That they are in fact considered inauspicious rather than results of the willful or malevolent intentions of others is not accidental. Bang Chaners faced with a breakdown in the fulfillment of commitments can of course point to the individual who directly caused it. But there is no satisfaction to be gained from this. The person who broke his obligation must have had his own good reason, and beyond this, there were probably other factors, unknown to both parties, that caused the breakdown. For most Bang Chaners, all human intentions are forever set within a framework of cosmic, and particularly moral, unpredictabilities.[22] If things do not work out the way one expects, it is most likely due to the inauspiciousness of the time, place, and persons involved. The proper time is particularly important. It is precisely for these reasons that the more important events in a person's life—marriage, trying to win a lottery or a maiden's heart, taking an important trip—are so often preceded by ceremonial attempts to decide the cosmologically auspicious conditions for effecting the event. These involve consultations with monks, shamans, and other religious practitioners, and highly ritualized forms are followed to select the appropriate conditions. (See Textor 1960 and 1962 for systematic discussions of the various kinds of problems and practices associated with this complex.) The kind of occurrences discussed above are not of this order of significance, but they do partake of the same cognitive assumptions that lead to such highly institutionalized practices. Thus, whereas most Occidentals would point exclusively to the actions of the other person as being both the necessary and sufficient cause of the interactional breakdown, Bang Chaners, who have considerably less confidence in human capacities, would really not be sure. To them, human volition represents only one of several indeterminate and uncontrollable factors giving rise to events. Who knows what accident, change of heart, sudden windfall—particularly one occasioned by something done by one of the parties several lives earlier—might intervene to alter what had originally been planned and agreed upon?

[21] This is just the term that villagers, with their wonderful sense of hyperbole, apply to such cases. The original Thai word is *nii*.

[22] I am indebted to L. M. Hanks, Jr., for suggesting this line of thought.

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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*243
• 466 Difficulty arises when farm workers are classified individually because of duplication. It was mentioned in Chapter II that family members might work for their lampai after they had fulfilled their obligation on the family farm work. It is seen, then, that a family member may be considered as both family worker and piece-worker. Even the farm operator himself may earn extra income from piece-working and thus becomes also a piece-worker. In fact, most farm operators who had only a small area to work did have time to earn extra income this way. It is only the hired laborer that could not earn extra income from piece-working because he is bound by contract to devote all his time to his employer's farm and household work. It is considered unbecoming for a hired laborer to take time out, even at night, to fish for his own biological family.

Sampling Technique

*128
621 So far we have been dealing mostly with the universe of our study -- the total population of our "natural" Bangchan Village as defined in Chapter II; although occasionally, it might have been noticed, reference has been made to a sample of 104 farm operators and of 96 continuing farm operators.

[121]
[161] Our primary attempt in this community study is to cover the entire village. It is obvious, however, that all relevant information cannot be gathered on some 300 families comprising this village of about 1,700 people. We may, for

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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178 some hired laborers who had left the village before the survey was started were not included, and so were some former hired laborers, especially those working as such in the earlier years, who might be living in the village but were not identified as former hired laborers. Third, of the 34 cases covered by the survey nine were persons of 20 years old or younger as of 1953. Naturally, these persons would not be considered as hired laborers in 1949 or even in 1950, for they would be too young then for the job. Besides, it was not necessary that all hired laborers should begin their job as soon as they had attained the proper age of say 18 years, for there were many factors militating against taking up the job at an early age, one of which was obligation to the family. As a matter of fact, two among our 34 laborers were obliged to quit their jobs because their parents wanted them to go back to the family and help in the farm work. One of these two laborers remained with the family for a year in 1951, went back to work with his former employer in 1952, then emerged as a farm operator in 1953. The other quitted the job in 1952 and had since remained a family worker on the family's rented farm. Fourth, these 34 laborers varied in sex, age, farming experience,
464 and working ability. Fifth, the employers of these hired
466 laborers also varied in the degree of generosity exemplified by the amount of wage they agreed to give their employees and their relative willingness to observe the oral contract. This last point was important in Bangchan where the supply

464 for labor exceeded the demand for it. Some employers were
• 466 known to have been in the habit of cheating their employees. To cite an example, in March 1953 A, a young man of 16 who was known to be one of the best transplanters in the village, was hired by Operator B at 50 baht a month. After working for B for three months, A quit the job because his employer had paid him only his wage for the first month and there was indication that he would not receive any more for his labor from his employer. The author was informed about this whole business by A's father, Laborer C, who complained bitterly against B. That happened just before the beginning of the 1953 rice growing season. It was rather surprising that the author discovered that a month later Laborer C was hired by his son's former employer -- Operator B. Three months later, the author saw Laborer C working not on B's field but on some body else's farm on August 19. Upon inquiry, it was found that history had again repeated itself -- Operator B had just fired Laborer C and refused to pay him for his three months' work. "He ate more, but worked less, and always found asleep," complained Operator B, "Besides, he was in the habit of criticizing me behind my back."

*128 These five points were brought up in connection with
464 Table 33 in order to caution against two generalizations
178 that might be made from a glance at the table. First, the number of laborers which appears to increase progressively from 1949 does not in any way indicate that more and more hired laborers have been employed in Bangchan. The figures

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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592 as it might seem to be, for there was a wide range of
464 ordination expenses and the family head naturally tended
792 to arrange one that was not so expensive unless it was for his own son. He might even arrange a joint ordination of
592 which the cost was much reduced. Moreover, most of the cost
464 of the ordination would be covered by the customary contributions made by neighbors. The lampai arrangement, which was nothing but a sophisticated term for wage, was a real concession on the part of the family head, indicating that he really wanted to keep the transient member in the family even at a certain cash expense.

464 The presence of transient family workers and their
592 relatively low remunerations indicated a condition of popu-
466 lation pressure onland. Already, these people had adversely
[160] affected the laboring sector of the village economy because they represented an additional supply of cheap labor. Although they had contributed to a low cost of producing paddy and thus benefited the operators, with the rise of the price of foods which farmers had to buy and with the decline of free food (in the forms of fish and aquatic plants) transient family members may in time become a liability rather than an asset to the family. To be sure, when such a time has arrived, the family would be reluctant to admit a transient member. The trouble, however, is that the cost of maintaining an extra family member is implicit and not readily distinguished by the family. It would thus take some time before the real situation would be recognized.